

PATH TO SOVEREIGNTY

7 Keys to Unlock Your Truest Self

BERTIL SCHAART

Do you believe external authorities have power over you?
Or are YOU your own internal power reference?

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PREFACE

I have fond memories of my childhood. I grew up in a loving family in a peaceful village. Life was beautifully simple. I played outside with my two brothers and other children in the neighbourhood. I curiously observed the world around me. Most of all I enjoyed being at home, reading or writing and feeling absolutely safe being myself.

I was a happy bright child who was eager to learn. With ease I was top of my class. I saw it as an exciting game to raise my hand up first to answer the teacher's questions and, at times, I even rightfully corrected the teacher.

When I moved to a new class in secondary school, I became the target of bullying. It was very mild and some might not even call it bullying. But, for me at the time, it was a serious warning: my behaviour in class is not appreciated by my environment. I sensed that if I continued my happy bright being, the bullying would worsen. I wanted to stop it as soon as possible. I henceforth refrained from showing I knew the answer. I kept my mouth shut. It had immediate positive effect: within a few days, the bullying had completely vanished. My strategy paid off. By denying being fully myself, I protect myself and kept safe.

School life continued as though nothing ever happened. Yet my decision fundamentally altered my life. No longer did I open my mouth voluntarily. The sweet reward for being sharp and bright was no longer available for me. In the following years, there were a few incidents of injustice which further strengthened my conviction that it is better to stay quiet and keep my mouth shut.

In the last year at secondary school, I failed my English oral final exam. In the conversation with my teacher, I used the word 'engine' to describe the combustion machinery of propeller airplanes. She immediately interrupted to correct me by saying I had used the wrong word. The right word was supposedly 'motor'. I disagreed. I had read many English books about aviation, watched BBC documentaries on the topic and collected cards of airplanes. All used 'my' word. I was certain I was not mistaken. My command of the English language was more than good. However, to use a Monty Python quote, I had "transgressed the unwritten law". She punished with the lowest grade I ever got.

As a teenager, I had a Saturday job. Examining my monthly salary specifications, I noticed many mistakes. Numbers, percentages, rates, they seemed to be changing monthly. There was no consistency and I decided to call the person responsible for finance and accounting. She could not clarify any of my questions, which was quite remarkable in itself, but she assured me she was going to check with their accounting partner. The following Saturday I was summoned to the office of the boss. He was furious and started shouting, swearing and insulting me. He accused me of occupying his expensive staff with 'stupid' questions. Although he did not let me talk, I did manage to explain to him in just a few words that there were mistakes on the salary slip. Angrily, he grabbed the papers and looked at it. The mistakes were immediately clear. There was something wrong structurally with the salary administration, affecting all employees. Instead of calming down, he went ballistic and got mad at me, because, I

guess, my discovery gave him even more of a headache. After a final shower of swear words, I was demoted and had to do lousy chores. I resigned.

Time heals wounds and now I can laugh heartily about these events. Thankfully friends take full advantage of the situation when I happen to use the 'wrong' word for a mechanical propulsion device. But at the time, it introduced me to unfairness and injustice, new concepts for me which sharply contrasted with the peaceful and just world I thought I lived in.

Another experience completely changed my life. At the beginning of my twenties, my first romantic relationship ended abruptly after two and a half beautiful years. She told me how much she loved me, but ended the relationship at the same time. She enigmatically said she could no longer be with me, as if there were an external reason beyond her control. She also threatened to end her life and did not want to be in contact with anyone. I tried to help her in all possible ways, but she was unreachable. She had been living a complete different inner life than what she told me, a life with severe psychological challenges. I was powerless and intensely sad. I was mourning the loss of someone who never existed. The emotional pain was so great it felt as though my entire being had been destroyed. The innocent happy bright child I used to be had died. The little me that was left, deeply hurt and fragile, decided never to trust anyone anymore.

Together with the previous lessons of self-censorship, my life evolved from there. I slowly started to rebuild myself as a person. I saw many things happening, but to protect myself I did not say or do anything. I was a quick learner, but kept quiet. In group discussions, I was aloof and kept a neutral stance, even if I had a strong opinion on the matter at hand. I merely used my voice to be accepted by my environment. I was conscious about picking the right words to say and became very skilful at that.

Many years passed and I had created a career centred life that was perfectly accepted and even lauded by my environment. I had learned that managing perceptions yielded to more personal success than actual improvement. It came at a huge unseen cost of sacrificing a piece of authentic self.

Fortunately for me, throughout all those years, my inner voice never ceased talking. It was speaking louder and louder, until it shouted so loud that I was finally able to really open my eyes and look at myself. My life, my work, it was all theatre play. I was an actor with a script on the stage of my own life. What happened to the happy bright boy who was always eager to learn? I decided to take radical measures.

A long and painful period of reclaiming my own self followed. It was, and still is to this date, a wonderful discovery and rediscovery of who I really am, and perhaps also a bit of who we are.

My journey not only brought me back to my authentic self, it also changed my perspective on life, on the world, on reality and on us as human beings. I am fascinated about Life and all its aspects. My inner world, like yours, is full of ideas, insights, dreams, solutions, creativity, perspectives, play and fun. For years, I kept this inner world closed to the outside world, only in order to fit in with society. I have learnt and experienced what the severe consequences are for me and also for others of keeping it locked.

And that is the very reason why I started writing this book. I want to share my pain and insights with you. I want to lend you a hand and help you to defend your right to sovereignty. Trust yourself to shine bright and make our outer world an even better place.

This book is divided in three parts. The first part describes my personal journey which led to very important decisions in my life in reviving my true self. My story is neither extraordinary nor sensational. It is nevertheless unique, like everyone else's life story, and I hope it is relatable to you. I included it in this book to give you more background and context of myself.

Fortunately, I am not unique in having made bold decisions in my life. The first part of this book is to motivate and inspire those who are willing to or are about to make major changes in their lives. It also helps those who already have made the first steps into their new world. It serves as an

encouragement and helps to build the faith to master the challenges you are facing.

The second part describes my thoughts on the topic of personal sovereignty. It starts by exploring personal freedom and personal truth, both strong personal values in my personality. It proceeds by focusing on the darker sides of life and how to stand in your truth.

Life is exceptional and wonderful. At the same time, our individual lives are quite insignificant if you contrast it with the vastness of the universe.

Because of that, not despite of that, your life is meaningful. But only if you decide you want to have it so. And that is what the third part of the book is about. It serves as a navigational help for you embarking on the journey towards your inner power. This is the fundament on which you can build a solid resilient life.

It describes 7 essential keys to unlock yourself from a restricted world, dominated by external authorities. It helps you to understand your life better and assist you in making appropriate decisions.

Thanks to my life adventures and business ventures, I came across many difficult situations where I had to make tough decisions. I am only human and did not always make the right call. Although painful, I learned tremendously from it. It inspired me to compile these keys. I use them whenever I embark on a new challenge.

The keys will assist you to always stay true to your inner values and reconnect to your inner being. You can come back to them again and again. They help you to avoid being drawn into circumstances that might give you the quick win, but will cost you too much in the longer run.

I would like to express my enormous gratitude to my lovely and inspiring wife Blanca. She never ceased to encourage and support me in all my endeavours. I also want to deeply thank my two children, Camilo and Magali. Although you are both young and with relative little experience on this planet, you both possess great wisdom and feel at ease to share that

with both Blanca and myself. Although sometimes painful for me, your brutal and pure honesty are a great encouragement for me to strive for continuous improvement of myself.

Furthermore, I want to expressly thank a number of people whom I have spoken over the course of the last years and have given me wonderful input to my thoughts. Our life paths have crossed at some point in time and your ideas and especially exemplary behaviour have helped me tremendously in my journey. So a very warm thank you to Lisa, Marije, Caroline, Sharat, Laure, Huib, Carel, Nathan, Redmer, Peter, and Madelon.

Bertil Schaart, 2021

Disclaimer

In this book I refer to individuals and organisations. This personal story is intended for inspirational purposes only. I have by no means the intention to defame any individual or organisation. Furthermore, everything written below is from my own personal perspective and is therefore a limited and biased perception of the reality. It merely reflects my frame of mind at the time of the described events.

PART ONE: MY STORY

A GLASS OF COGNAC

*A tavern is a place
where madness is sold by the bottle.*

Jonathan Swift

One more. Definitely. I decided I deserved it. It had been a long terrible day. “Could you please pour me another glass of cognac? Yes, that one. The most expensive one.”

“There you go sir”

“Thank you. And you can put it again on room 103.”

I couldn't care less. All my business expenses were paid by my boss.

There I was. Alone. In a bar. In a hotel. Abroad.

And I was doing great. I had a super job! Great salary. Beautiful lease car. I travelled internationally. Gold member of the airline company. Bonuses. Respect. Promising future. I was great... and everybody thought so. But deep down I knew better.

I was only great... on paper.

In reality, I was deeply unhappy. I worked 70 hours a week, was always away from home, no time for friends and family. I was single and I did not

have time for love. In fact, I did not have a personal life at all. I worked hard, but did not have the time to play hard.

I did not support the work I was doing. It didn't make sense. The large project I was made responsible for would only cost the company money, it wouldn't bring anything to the company. From an organizational point of view, it was a big mess. Any attempt to change that situation was blocked by the management team. At the same time, I had become part of a political power play and was asked not to tell the truth about the project. Although my job title was impressive, in the end it boiled down to chasing people to work on a project that didn't make sense from the beginning.

It was getting late and as I stared in my glass, the waiter told me softly he was going to close the bar for the night. He started calculating the bill. I realized I was the only one left at the bar.

I started reflecting on my life. What was I doing with my life?

As I was younger than most of my peers at work, I looked at their lives to project what my future would look like.

I noticed I had a growing number of colleagues with medical problems, due to the severe stressful situation at work. I was very healthy, but I also experienced the stress and tension. I felt a continuous flow of adrenaline rushing through my veins. Similar to revving up the engine of your car, into the red. It is possible, but being in the red for a long time will ruin it.

Then I saw the images of my colleagues with relationship problems. I was jealous, wishing I had those problems, then at least I would have a girlfriend! But I had no time to meet someone. This senseless job did not allow me any personal space.

Then there were the colleagues with drinking problems. Right in the middle of reflecting on them, the waiter pushed the invoice of the evening to me. Its amount demonstrated clearly I was well on my way to join this group of alcoholic co-workers.

My personal life was not much better. I did not have a real home. I was living in a sublet rental apartment in Amsterdam. In other words, I had